

This sample of A Year of Playing Skillfully 2nd edition contains snippets from the month of September, meant to give you a feel for the variety of activities you can expect each month.



SECOND EDITION

BY
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SEPTEMBER

Theme: The World I Live In
Character Trait: Wonder

SEPTEMBER

THEME: THE WORLD I LIVE IN

CHARACTER TRAIT: WONDER

HOME LIFE/SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

- ☐ hot air balloon ride
- ☐ say please and thank you
- ☐ manners book
- ☐ cleaning dishes after mealtime
- ☐ exit plan

MATH/MANIPULATIVES

- ☐ count and swing
- ☐ nature math book
- ☐ water bottle marble game
- ☐ shape making
- ☐ diy spindlebox

ART/MUSIC

- ☐ diy outdoor weaving loom
- ☐ big painting
- ☐ clay tree faces
- ☐ dale chihuly art study
- ☐ salt and mirror art

FIELD TRIPS

- ☐ children's museum
- ☐ grocery store

LANGUAGE/LITERACY

- ☐ name letter museum
- ☐ tactile letter practice
- ☐ my world book
- ☐ how does your story begin?
- ☐ print rich environment
- ☐ journaling prompts

SCIENCE/SENSORY

- ☐ science and nature study basket
- ☐ diy pendulum
- ☐ pond play
- ☐ herbal tea play dough
- ☐ my world nesting set

OUTDOOR/GROSS MOTOR

- ☐ ball skills
- ☐ log obstacle course
- ☐ spin-a-thon
- ☐ doggy doggy where's your bone
- ☐ movement play date

"Always be on the lookout for the presence of wonder."
EB White

HOME LIFE AND SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL

Hot Air Balloon Ride: Start your year with a bang! We love to roll out the “shock and awe” at the beginning of the year for our young children. Splurge on a dozen balloons and tie them to a laundry basket. Let your children imagine where they might go on their balloon ride. Show them Google Earth over your house and ask them what it might look like to be so high. Do not be discouraged if you don’t have a fancy basket like the one in our picture, a plastic laundry basket or a cardboard box works just fine. Make sure that you check out our private Facebook group, A Year of Playing Skillfully in Action to meet other families and hear about their hot-air-balloon adventure on the first day of school! Everyone is overjoyed when we start to see all of the kids taking off on their adventures on the first day of school! This activity has become an annual tradition for many families using this curriculum guide.

Say Please and Thank You: Manners, manners, manners. Teaching them at a young age is key. This is an instance where modeling helps tremendously. A fun way to teach manners is to over exaggerate when speaking to your family. PLEASE put your shoes away. THANK YOU for your help today. If you have ever read *The Berenstain Bears Forget Their Manners*, you know what we are talking about!



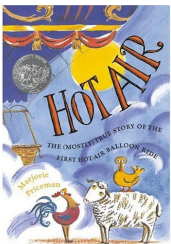
Make up a tray of what ever fruits and veggies you have handy to let your kids decorate a paper plate for their own balloon snack!



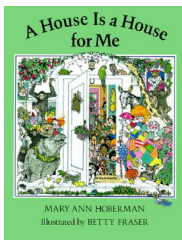
Clearing dishes after mealtimes: Young children need to eat frequent small meals, therefore there are many opportunities to teach young children to take the dirty dishes to the sink. After each meal time, encourage your child to clean up his or her own place setting. Throw the napkin away, place utensils and dinnerware safely in the sink. Some children might be ready to rinse these items and place them in the dishwasher. Consistency is the key to helping a child remember to do this chore. If your child forgets, we encourage you to resist the temptation to do it for them. Simply call them back to the table and remind them of their responsibility.

Exit Plan: I truly hope that your family never experiences an emergency that requires a quick exit from your home, but it is best to be prepared. With your children, draw a map of your house and decide on an exit plan from every room. Practice the “stop, drop and roll” method with your children in case of a fire. My home has burned down twice and I feel strongly that children (and adults) should always have an exit plan. You might want to make copies of your mapped-out exit plan, laminate them, and post them around your home.

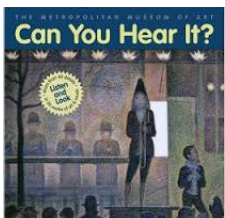
BOOKS



Hot Air by Marjorie Priceman | This is the perfect book to read as you prepare your children for their own “hot air balloon ride”. Have your child pack along their favorite stuffed animals and imagine what they would be saying if they went for such a crazy ride!



A House is a House for Me by Mary Ann Hoberman | This classic children’s book celebrates the diversity of homes and encourages your children to appreciate the unique places where they and other living things live. It’s a wonderful book for sparking conversations about shelter, family, and the world around us. Allow your children to pause and ask questions as you read.



Can You Hear It by William Lach | In this powerful book, young readers are introduced to great music through great works of art. From *The Flight of the Bumblebee* to *The Four Seasons* to *Night on Bald Mountain*, beloved music is illustrated by great works of art, and the text and accompanying music which urges young readers to listen for certain instruments. Can you hear the car horns honking, played by clarinets? Can you hear the horses’ hooves, played by castanets? A CD does come with this book, but it might be easier to watch and listen on YouTube. Check the resource page at kathyegggers.com/resources for the most current links.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Name Letter Museum: Parents often ask which letters their children should learn first and the answer is always, the letters in your child's name. These letters are the most important because they mean something to your child and will help them have a concrete understanding that letters represent words and words matter.

Supplies Needed:

- Cardboard Boxes or Poster Board
- Items to decorate letters (Paint, Markers, Scissors, Glue, Stickers, Magazines)
- Mod Podge (optional)
- Foam Brush (optional)

Cut out your large letters in your child's name from cardboard boxes or poster board. Invite your child to decorate the letters however they wish.

Prop the letters up against a wall and help your child collect items from your home and outside that start with the same letters in their name. For example, Sarah. We might collect a seashell, an apple, a ring, an apron, and a hat.

Place these items in front of your child's letter. Once you have helped your child get the first item, encourage them to go and try to find items on their own.

Notice how your child reacts and if this is frustrating, keep helping them. There is no rush for them to do this alone.

If you have space in your home, make a museum area out of your child's name letters and let them add to this throughout the year. It is fun to watch them discover with confidence the sounds that represent letters in their name.

Tactile Letter Practice: Before we teach children to write, it is important to strengthen their fine motor skills and help them recognize that letters and words have value. A great way to accomplish both is to invite your children to play with tactile writing bags.

Every day, every hour, the parents are either passively or actively forming those habits in their children upon which, more than upon anything else, future character and conduct depend. -Charlotte Mason

MATH AND MANIPULATIVES

Count and Swing: Make a point of going outside and swinging on a swing. Swinging is a valuable activity that benefits the vestibular system and helps the brain to process all types of input. As you swing your child, count with them. Older children can even learn to start skip counting by 2's! Since we are talking about swinging, we often get asked how to teach children to get the concept of swinging themselves. At our house we always sing a made up song called, *Out and Under* that is helpful in accomplishing that goal.

Nature Math Book: An invitation to play that includes nature is always a win-win. This nature-math book will give your child an opportunity to discover, explore, and create a math and language activity inspired by their findings.

Take a trip outside or to a nearby park and collect several of each available natural material. Look for items such as leaves, flowers, sticks, rocks, and sweet gum balls. These treasures will make a fantastic addition to your science and nature shelf, but before you store them away, let's use them to create a nature math book.

Prepare a blank book or use a pre-made one. Group the collected items and display them for your child to reference during the book-making process. Before you start, ask your child some observation questions about the displayed items:

- How many leaves does it have? • How big is it? • What shape do you see?
- How many petals do you see? • Describe the texture of that item.

Create math equations using the collected objects. Invite your child to draw the items to represent the equation. For example, if they collected four pine cones, they might draw three pine cones in one group and one in another. You (or they) can write the equation underneath the drawing: $3 + 1 = 4$. They can even glue some of the flatter items into their book if they prefer.

Once they've completed their book, have them "read" it back to you, reinforcing the concepts they've learned.

Water Bottle Marble Game: This math game is actually a two for one. It is a game that not only builds math skills, but it will also help strengthen fine motor skills needed for writing down the road. This game can be made in minutes and offers great play value.

Supplies Needed:

- Mini water bottles (2-4) • A bag of marbles • A spoon



3 sides = triangle
4 sides = square
5 sides = pentagon
6 sides = hexagon
7 sides = heptagon
8 sides = octagon

Shape Making: Make popsicle stick shapes by offering 4 sticks of the same color for a square, 3 shapes of the same color for a triangle, and so on. By just giving them the proper number of sides, they can make their own shapes. You can write the names on the sticks with a sharpie if you like. Throughout the day, point out shapes everywhere. For example, on your drive to pick up groceries point out the shapes of traffic signs. In the store, your options are endless, have a shape hunt. When you get home, invite the children to create the shapes they saw with the popsicle sticks.

A fun way to extend this activity is to offer glue, twist ties, pipecleaners and play dough and invite your children to use their imagination and make a 3-D creation (shapes or something else) with the popsicle sticks.

SCIENCE AND SENSORY



Science and Nature Study Basket: Give your child a sense of wonder about the natural world by encouraging them to explore outside. Keep a basket near your door packed with the essentials for your young naturalist. Children's binoculars and nature guides are great! Magnifying glasses and bug boxes are fun, too. Give your child nature journals and colored pencils or even just a clipboard and paper. Help them get to know the world and record what they see. When observing nature, ask your child open-ended questions. Allowing children to ponder over nature will help develop their critical thinking skills and a love and respect for our world.

DIY Pendulum: Using a pendulum is a fun process of trial and error and experimentation for children. The process is not nearly as obvious to them as it is to us, and they will delight in using it to knock down their creations as they discover the power of the swinging motion.



Supplies Needed:

- Set of Nesting Cups: You can make these out of boxes or graduated tin cans.
- Pictures representing: Earth, your country, your state, your city, your neighborhood, your home, and your child's room.
- Packing Tape

Print the pictures and write the name of each place on the corresponding picture.

Tape the pictures onto the nesting cups, placing the Earth on the largest cup and working your way down in size with each appropriate picture.

Once the cups are prepared, ask your child to identify which is bigger: their room or their house? Which is smaller: their state or their city? Have your child place the cups inside each other while asking questions. This creates a concrete visualization for the child of how their bedroom fits within their home, neighborhood, city, state, country, and Earth.

ART AND MUSIC



DIY Outdoor Weaving Loom: Weaving is a fantastic way to build fine motor skills and add a creative pop of color to your environment! We made our loom from a recycled window frame and some chicken wire and simply leaned it against a tree outside. You can easily make a loom with a plastic laundry basket, a wire egg basket, or use your chain linked fence in the backyard.

Fill a bucket with 3-inch wide cloth strips and encourage your young learner to weave away! One of our favorite things about this activity was watching the birds visit the joyful colorful tapestries and collect strings for their nests. This is an art process that can be repeated over and over.

Supplies Needed:

- Framed Chicken Wire Loom (or laundry basket, wire egg basket or chain linked fence)
- 3 inch wide cloth strips in a variety of fabric

Before I Eat My Meals:

Original Author: Unknown Sung to: "If You're Happy and You Know it"

1. Oh, before I eat my meals, I wash my hands,

(scrub, scrub)

Oh, before I eat my meals, I wash my hands,

(scrub, scrub)

Oh, it's very smart I think,

Sends those germs right down the sink.

Oh, before I eat my meals, I wash my hands.

(scrub, scrub)

2. Oh, before I eat my meals, I set my place,

(set, set)

Oh, before I eat my meals, I set my place,

(set, set)

I set everything I need,

I feel very proud, indeed.

Oh, before I eat my meals, I set my place.

(set, set)

3. Oh, before I eat my meals, I pass the food,

(pass the plate)

Oh, before I eat my meals, I pass the food,

(pass the plate)

'Cause we know it's only fair

For us all to have our share

Oh, before I eat my meals, I pass the food.

Try making up your own manners song, using a common tune. Let the words be silly and have fun! The bonus is that singing about manners will stick in their brain longer than hearing a lecture about manners.

GROSS MOTOR AND OUTDOOR

Ball Skills: Ball skills are fundamental for young children, offering a playful way to develop crucial abilities regardless of a child's inherent athleticism. These activities enhance bilateral coordination, hand-eye coordination, timing, motor planning, and focus—all while providing pure enjoyment! We'll be exploring a variety of ball skills throughout the year.

This guide offers a general timeline for ball skill development in young children. Remember, every child progresses at their own pace, and breakthroughs can happen unexpectedly. The key is to encourage consistent practice and celebrate every effort!

made it easy to spot for our little ones. You can vary your hiding place and difficulty based on the age and ability of your child. Have your child curl up and pretend to be a sleeping doggy with their eyes closed. Place the noodle somewhere in your backyard and then say:

*Doggy, Doggy, where's your bone?
Somebody stole it from your home.
Guess who! Maybe you . . .
Maybe the monkeys from the zoo.
Wake up doggy, find your bone.*

Your child will love running to get the bone! Take turns being the doggy! For older children use a real dog bone to increase the challenge.

Movement Play Date: Organize a fun-filled playdate with other preschool families! Ask each family to contribute an outdoor gross motor activity, and meet at a park or backyard for a mini field day. It's a great way for kids to be active and for parents to connect. Snacks and drinks are encouraged! Consider making it a monthly gathering.

FIELD TRIPS

Children's Museum: We are fortunate to have marvelous children's museums across our nation to explore. Check out the resource page at kathyeggers.com/resources to see a list of children's museums by state. Many have environments like fire stations, grocery stores, and even real airplanes ready for children to discover and pretend. If your children enjoy your local museum, consider a year long family pass to enjoy on rainy days when you need a pick me up!

Grocery Store: Spice up your weekly routine with a field trip to your local grocery store or farmer's market. It's a fantastic opportunity to show your child how food makes its journey from farm to table. To make it extra special, let your child plan a dinner menu and create a shopping list. Together, you can explore the aisles, gather the ingredients, and then cook a delicious meal together. This hands-on experience will make learning about food fun and memorable!

*Now I see the secret of the making of the best
persons. It is to grow in the open air, and to eat
and sleep with the earth. -Walt Whitman*



SEPTEMBER SUPPLY LIST

Hot Air Balloon Snack

- Bananas
- Strawberries
- Celery
- Popcorn
- Graham Crackers
- Grapes
- String Cheese
- Paper Plates

Manners Book

- Blank book or materials for making a book (plain paper, cardstock, stapler, brads, or keyring)
- Magazines
- Crayons/Colored Pencils/Markers
- Glue
- Scissors

Name Letter Museum

- Cardboard or Posterboard
- Mod Podge
- Foam Brush
- Items that begin with each letter of your child's name

My World Book

- Camera Phone or Other Camera
- Printer
- Scissors
- Blank book or materials for making a book (plain paper, cardstock, stapler, brads, or keyring)
- Glue

Print Rich Environment

- Sentence Strip
- Tape

DIY Spindle

- Tin Cans
- Rocks
- Glue
- Sticks
- Scrap piece of wood (a 2x4, approximately 30 inches long would work)
- Numbers 1-10 in printables section

Shape Making

- Popsicle Sticks
- Colored Masking Tape
- Pipe Cleaners
- Foam Pieces

DIY Pendulum

- PVC Pipe, Tension Rod or Broom
- Twine
- Tennis Ball
- Eyehook

Herbal Play Dough

- 4 Herbal Tea Bags
- 2 Cups of Water
- 2 Cups White Flour
- 1/2 Cup Salt
- 4 Tablespoons Cream of Tartar
- 1 Tablespoon Oil